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BOOK REVIEWS

The Student's Chaucer. By THE REV. WALTER W. SKEAT. The Macmillan Company. \$1.75.

CHAUCER is winning a place for himself in our secondary schools. Like our own Longfellow, Chaucer was the story-teller of the young civilization in which he grew up. To the literary treasures he brought from many lands he knew how to give a setting that might stand against both fashion and fate. Even young people take to Chaucer better than to any other of the greater names, except Scott. To be sure, a little language study is required to understand Chaucer. But how little! We can understand Chaucer as the Germans cannot understand Walther von der Vogelweide, Wolfram von Eschenbach, or Gottfried von Strassburg; as Italians, I dare say, cannot understand their great trecentists. Chaucer is not only nearer to us in time, but is brought still nearer by our reading in Shakespeare.

Fortunately we have now, after long waiting, a good text of Chaucer. Hitherto the *Canterbury Tales*, which every student should know as a whole, have been accessible *in toto* only in the reprints of Wright's one-sided text or in the selections edited, like a few of the other works, for philological students. Skeat's *Student's Chaucer*, however, gives us in one volume, with sufficient apparatus, a sound text of all the poet's works.

The *Student's Chaucer* stands in direct relation to the sumptuous Oxford edition by the law of *noblesse oblige*. The text is practically a reprint, space being saved by bracketing interpolations and marking emendations with an obelus. The apparatus is compressed into twenty-two pages of introduction, besides the text-critical appendix, which takes up the last fourteen pages of the body of the book, and the glossarial index, which takes up a hundred and fifty beautifully printed pages, separately numbered. The richness of the introduction is marvelous. Five pages give the known facts in Chaucer's life, together with brief abstracts of the documents. The writings and editions are treated in a little over two pages, enough at least for refer-

ence. Three more pages furnish a *vademecum* of Chaucerian grammar, which is practical and without philological cant. Meter and versification get each half a page; pronunciation not quite two pages—more than is usual in generalizations of the subject, and enough to satisfy the student that there is reason behind the dogma.

The text (718 pages) embraces the fragments (marked A, B, and C) of the Romaunt of the Rose, twenty-four minor poems, Boethius, Troilus, House of Fame, Good Women, Astrolabe, and Canterbury Tales. A justly liberal canon.

The glossarial index treat B and C of the Romaunt under a separate alphabet, leaving the main glossary truly a “well of English undefiled.” The beginner gets help in graphical as well as lexical difficulties.

The volume is uniform with the one-volume editions of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson, and the reissue of the Globe editions, though of somewhat inferior typography. But the book, put out by the publishers immediately after their six-volume library edition, comes so nearly being a gift that one dislikes to find fault with the mechanical workmanship of the volume.

GUIDO H. STEMPEL

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Elementary Geology. By RALPH S. TARR, B.S., F.G.S.A., Professor of Dynamic Geology and Physical Geography at Cornell University. The Macmillan Company.

This is the best text-book in elementary geology which has fallen under the notice of the writer. The author has not sought to write down to youthful students, but presents the subject at once with dignity and simplicity. To this end he has made a discriminating selection from the great body of facts offered by the science, and has unfolded the special themes with interest and a due sense of proportion. Of about 500 pages 105 pages are given to structural geology, 279 pages to the dynamic side of the subject, and 103 to stratigraphic, or, better we should say, historical geology, considering that the book is for beginners. The author's judgment is right in reserving fuller discussions of geological history for the college student.

There are 268 figures in the text, twenty-five plates, and a good index. The teaching power of the book is greatly enhanced by the